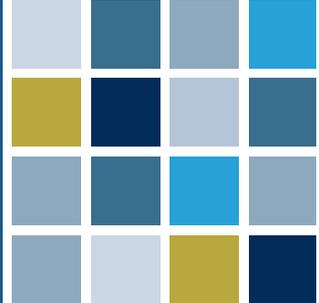




### Strategic Intelligence Bulletin Australia 2014: Bomb Statistics (U)



Date of Report: 21 November 2016

PROMIS Document ID 9126145

This report is written for: Strategic Intelligence

#### Summary

- From 1 January to 31 December 2014, Weapons Technical Intelligence received 698 incident reports from the Australian policing jurisdictions. Of these, 21 were deemed to be significant<sup>1</sup>. (U)
- Of the 698 incidents reported, 56 are recorded as bombings. (U)
- Reported casualties for the 2014 year were 32 people injured and two fatalities (U)
- New South Wales (NSW) reported the highest number of incidents with 292, followed by Queensland with 235 incidents. (U)
- A significant rise in reported incidents from NSW (from 21 in 2013 to 292 in 2014) is due to a procedural change in how they report their data, rather than a genuine increase in incidents. (U)
- The most commonly identified bombing targets/locations were open areas and residences (e.g. letterbox). In approximately half of all cases, the target was not identified. (U)
- As in previous years, the most common improvised explosive devices used in Australia are still of a simple design or are small commercial fireworks. (U)

<sup>1</sup> "Significant" incident: Damage in excess of \$5000; the target is deemed important or sensitive; the device itself or component/s are significant in design, construction or placement; the device is delivered through the mail system; the incident is confirmed to be linked to a known terrorist group; someone is killed or injured as a result of the device functioning

This document is the property of the Australian Federal Police (AFP). It may not be copied or disseminated to any third party without prior AFP approval. To arrange approval, please contact the Intelligence Dissemination team.

# UNCLASSIFIED

## 2014 National Incidents

A total of 698<sup>2</sup> national incidents involving explosives were reported by state and territory police services (Figure 1(a)) to Weapons Technical Intelligence (WTI) in 2014. This brief presents statistical information pertaining to the reported incidents<sup>3</sup>. (U)

The incident types are categorised in the table below and in figure 1 (b):

Incident type	Definition	Total incidents
Recovery	An incident involving the recovery of an explosive device or material.	293
Bombing	An incident involving the functioning of an explosive device.	56
Threat	The threatened use of an explosive device at a certain time and place (written or verbal by any medium).	87
Suspect item	An item considered to be suspicious by response personnel, requiring specialist inspection, but found to be innocuous.	209
Attempted bombing	An incident involving the use of an explosive device that has failed to function (e.g. through design or assembly defect, component failure or render-safe procedure).	15
Other	Incident not described by other categories.	23 <sup>4</sup>
Hoax	An item that is placed, designed or manufactured in a manner intended to appear or otherwise cause on to believe that the item is an explosive device.	14
Theft	The illicit acquisition of an explosive device or material.	1

In comparison to the statistics for 2013, reported bombings are down approximately 61% (144 in 2013), with no single explanation attributed to this decline. Suspect items are up 290% (72 in 2013), whilst thefts are down approximately 83% (six in 2013). (U)

The incident type "other" is up approximately 267% (nine in 2013); however seven of these incidents are recorded as either "accidental explosions" (three) or premature explosions (four). This may also reflect the procedural changes updated statistics provided by NSW RBDU. (U)

Recoveries accounted for approximately 42% (293) of the total number of incidents. Of the recoveries, 42% (124) incidents were related to the recovery of commercially manufactured fireworks, 25% (73) incidents involved the recovery of commercially manufactured explosives (i.e. det cord, emulsion carts, detonators, etc.) and approximately 12% (34) incidents related to the recovery of military explosive ordnance (MILEO). (U)

<sup>2</sup> Total number is up from 2013 due to procedural changes updated statistics provided by NSW RBDU.

<sup>3</sup> Disclaimer: This brief pertains only to incidents reported to WTI; it is possible that there have been incidents that were not reported and therefore not incorporated into the present paper.

<sup>4</sup> Accidental explosion (5 reported incidents) and premature explosion (2 reported incidents) are included in this total.

Incidents by State

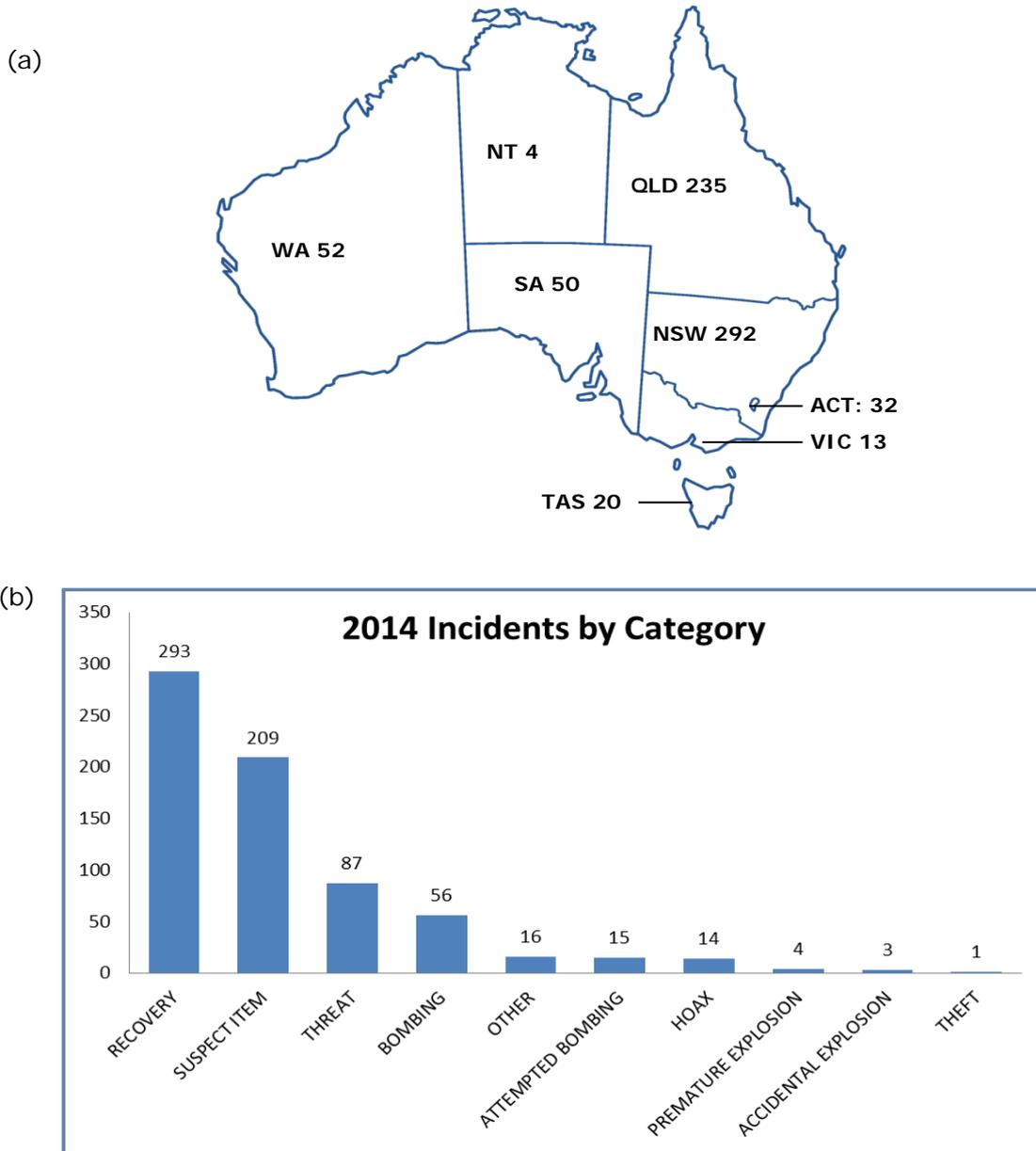


Figure 1: (a) 2014 incidents by state/territory; (b) 2014 incidents by category (U)

This document is the property of the Australian Federal Police (AFP). It may not be copied or disseminated to any third party without prior AFP approval. To arrange approval, please contact the Intelligence Dissemination team.

# UNCLASSIFIED

## Total incidents in 2014 by state and territory

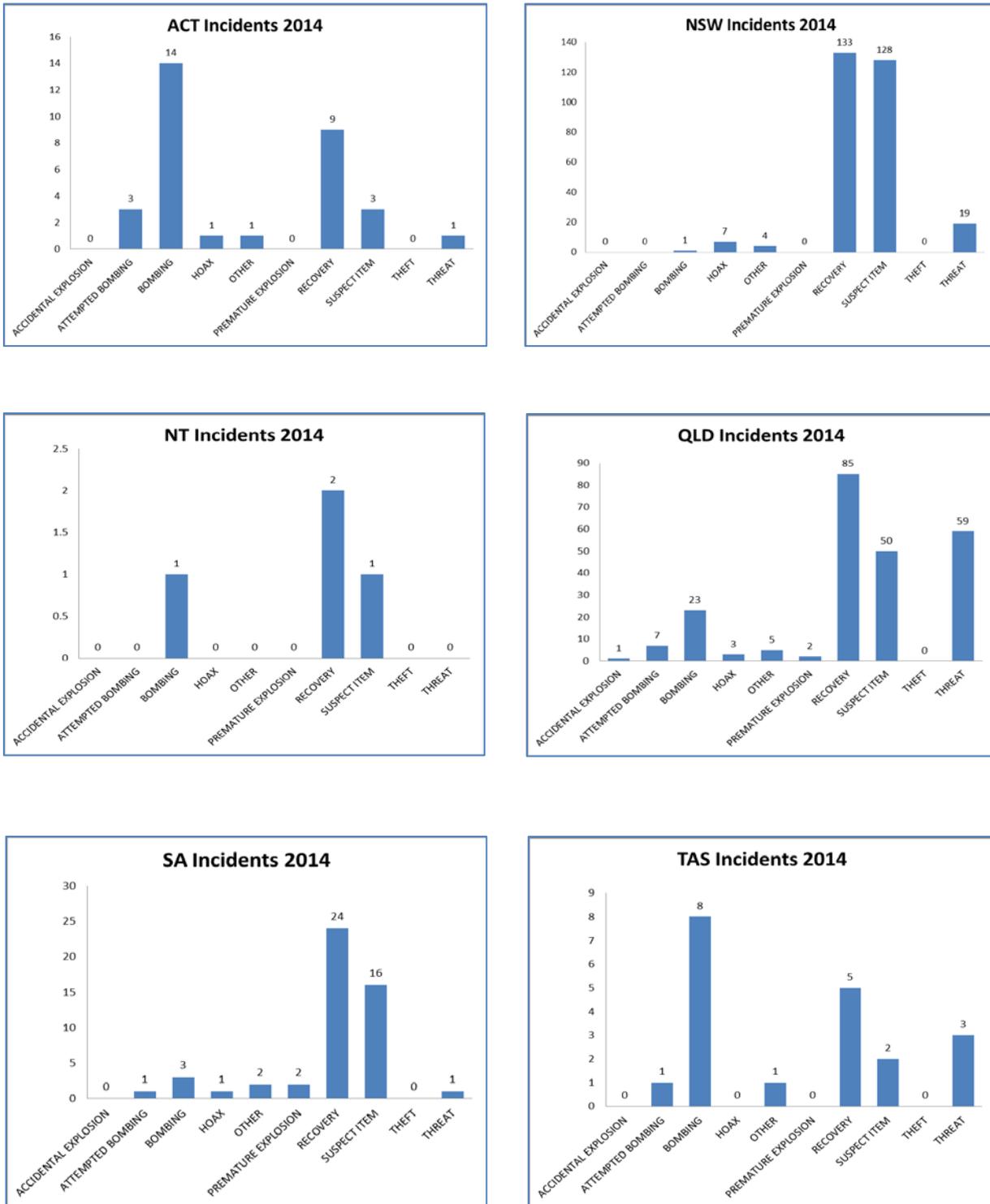


Figure 2: Incidents reported by state and territory police jurisdictions in 2014. (U)

This document is the property of the Australian Federal Police (AFP). It may not be copied or disseminated to any third party without prior AFP approval. To arrange approval, please contact the Intelligence Dissemination team.

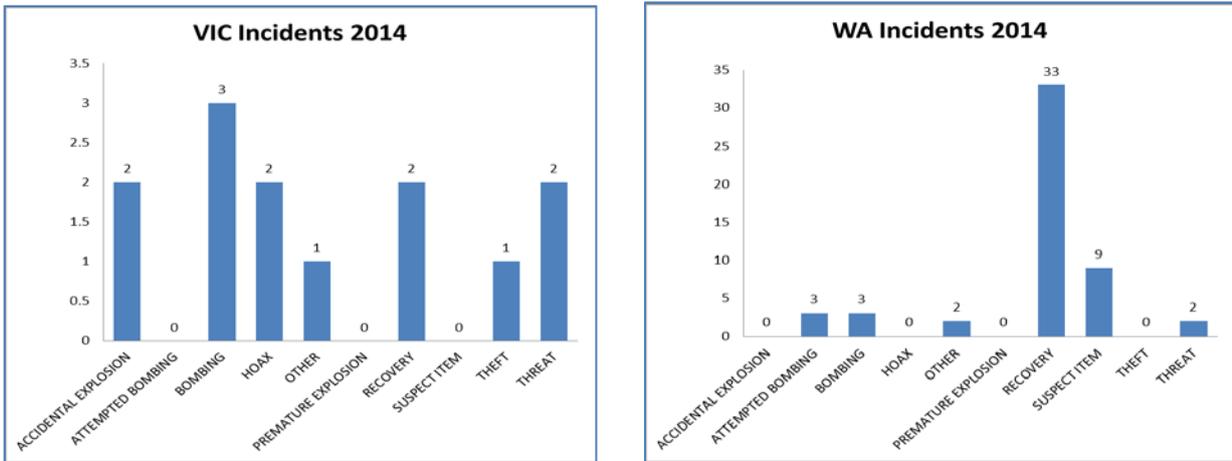


Figure 3: Incidents reported by state and territory police jurisdictions in 2014. (U)

## Incident Targets

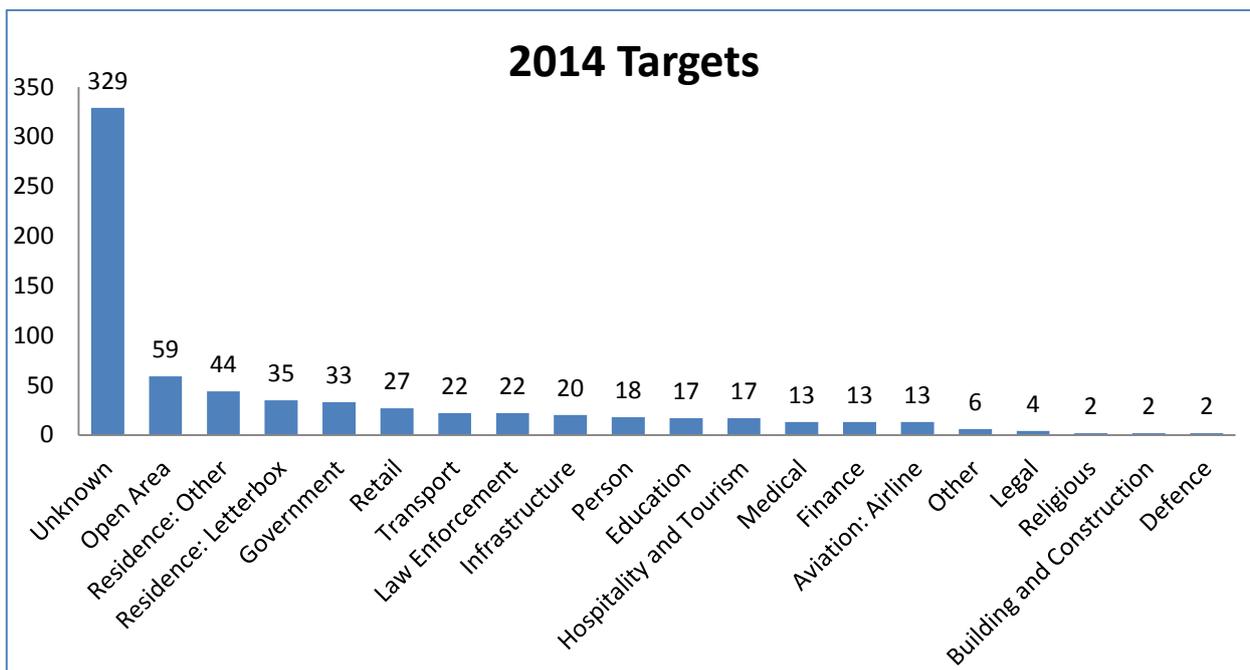
### Targets: all incidents

As illustrated below (Figure 4), the majority of incident targets (47%) were not explicitly specified in reporting (i.e. “unknown”); this normally corresponds to an incident where there is no clear identifiable target or premises. (U)

In terms of targets, we saw a substantial increase in the targeting of government facilities (from 13 to 33 incidents – 254% increase), law enforcement (from seven to 22 incidents – 310% increase) and aviation: airline (up from one to 13 incidents – 1300% increase) compared to 2013. Law enforcement was primarily the target of threats; however there were also two bombings (QLD & TAS) and one attempted bombing (QLD). Law enforcement in SA also received three suspect items, namely “unsolicited mail from an unknown sender in Taiwan” that were found to contain “advertising material”. There is no single explanation for the rise in Government facilities being targeted. The rise in aviation incidents can be predominantly attributed to threats (either by phone or verbal at the airport). (U)

The targeting of residences (letterbox or other) was similar to 2013 (combined total of 80 versus 79 for 2014); however, when combined, they still account for the second most common target, accounting for 11% of the total. (U)

Approximately 8% of incidents (third most) were reported as occurring in “open areas”, which typically refer to public parks, and generally involve nuisance acts or experimentation with some type of explosive (usually fireworks or some form of pyrotechnic composition). (U)



**Figure 4:** 2014 Targets (U)

### Targets associated with significant incidents

In 2014, there were 21 incidents classified as significant (Figure 5 (a)). This was down 45% from the 38 reported as significant in 2013. Of these, six incidents were recorded as having an “unknown target”, followed by “person” with four incidents (Figure 5 (b)). (U)

There were two recorded fatalities for 2014 (the same as 2013) from separate incidents:

1. One was deemed a very significant incident and was recorded as a bombing (Victoria). This incident also resulted in serious injuries to two Victoria Police members.
2. The other was the result of a suicide. (U)

A total of 32 people received injuries from various incidents. The number of injuries was up by 15 (89%) compared to 2013 (17 injuries). Two significant incidents accounted for 14 injuries:

1. One of the most significant incidents for the 2014 year was the Angellala Creek Ammonium Nitrate explosion in central QLD. Approximately 52.8 Tonnes of SSAN (security sensitive ammonium nitrate) exploded when a semi-trailer, which was transporting the product, failed to negotiate a bridge and crashed. A total of eight people received injuries. This incident did not have a criminal motive.
2. Another significant event occurred in Middle Park, Victoria. Police and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) were attending to a welfare check where the MFB were required to gain access. Three Police members and two MFB members entered the unit where they smelt gas emanating from a 9 kilo LP gas bottle on the bedroom floor. An explosion

then occurred in the unit injuring all five members and the POI, who was on his bed. The POI was apparently attempting to commit suicide by gassing himself. This was deemed an accidental explosion. (U)

Other incidents involved experimentation, vandalism and nuisance acts, but may be classed as significant due to sophistication, rarity, methodology employed, or amount of damage inflicted. (U)

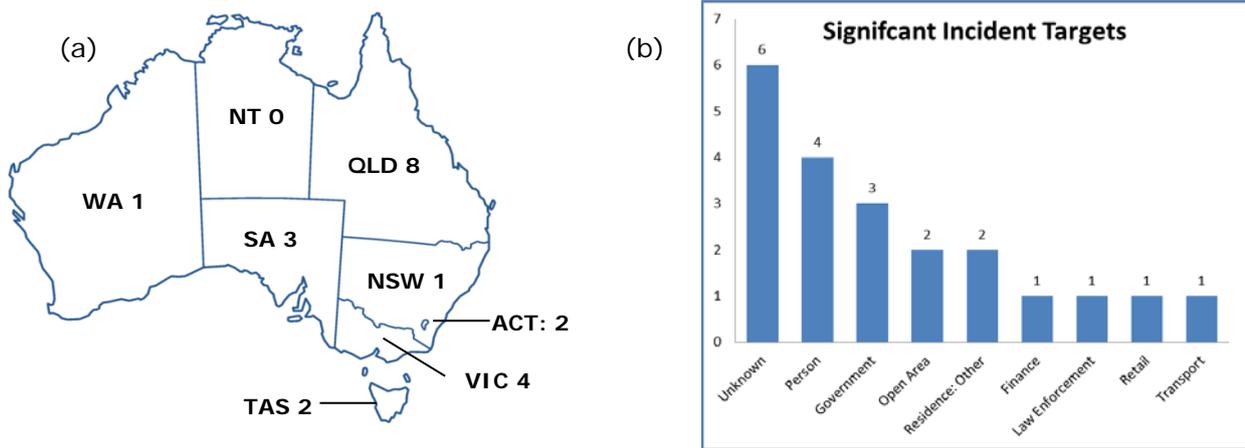


Figure 5: (a) 2014 Significant Incidents per state/territory and; (b) by Target. (U)

### Motive

For the vast majority (59%) of incidents, the motive (415 incidents) was unknown (Figure six). This constitutes a greater fraction than was observed in 2013 (320 incidents, 50%). (U)

Of the known motives, criminal nuisance/prank (135 incidents) was the most prevalent, constituting just over 19%, while just over 8% of incidents (60) were attributable to experimentation. Experimentation was up four-fold compared to 2013 (15 vs 60). (U)

There is no single explanation for this; however the vast amount of information on explosives/homemade explosives available over the internet and how to procure, make and use them, cannot be excluded as a contributing factor. (U)

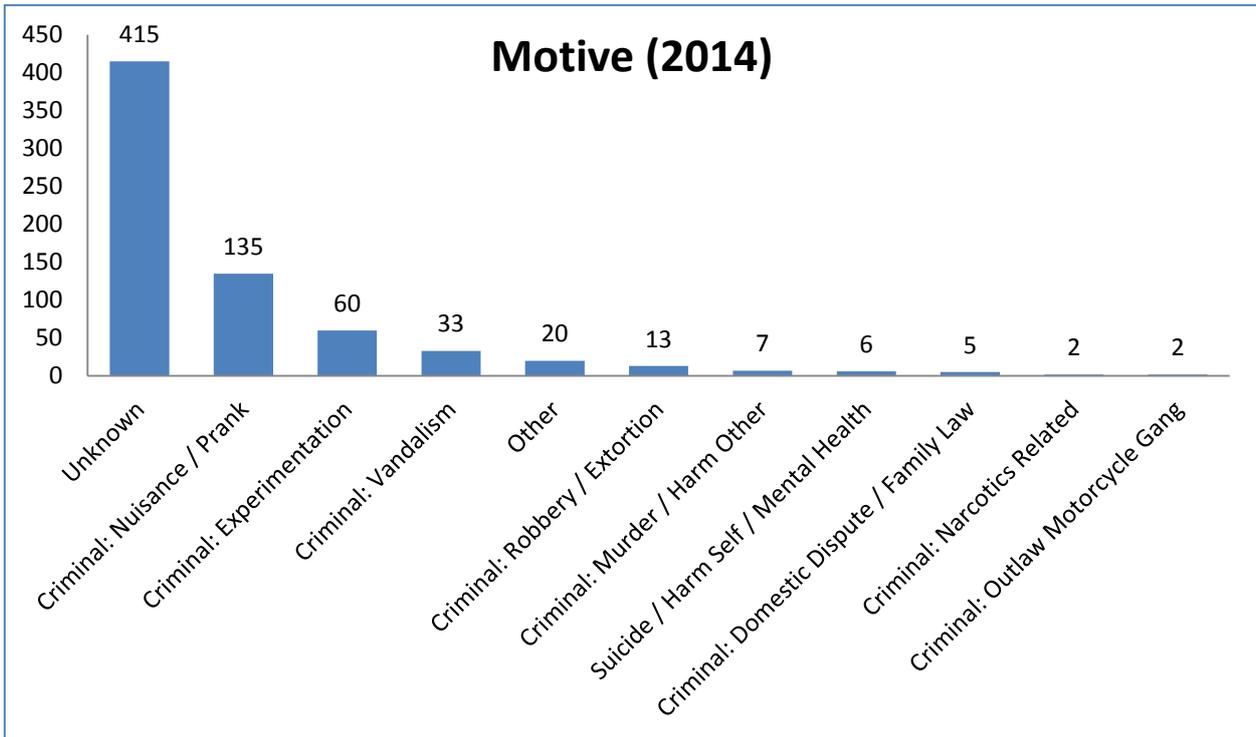


Figure 4: 2014 Motives. (U)

## IED Componentry

### Initiation systems

Of the 56 recorded bombings, the majority of initiations were recorded as unknown (20 incidents). Of the known recorded initiation systems, the majority (39 incidents) were found to be improvised time delays. Of these, the majority were initiated using some type of fuse (i.e. safety fuse or fireworks fuse, etc.) attached to an improvised main charge. Sparklers<sup>5</sup> were used in eight incidents, followed by electrical initiation with five recorded incidents. In 2014, there were no recorded RCIED (remote controlled improvised explosive device) incidents in Australia; however a mobile phone was utilised on an IED that was recorded as a hoax. Of the five recorded electrical initiation systems, one significant incident occurred in Dalby Queensland on 25 March 2014 was a victim-operated IED. (U)

<sup>5</sup> 'Sparklers' are essentially hand-held fireworks, comprised of a rigid metal wire of the order of tens of centimetres in length, which have been coated in a slow-burning pyrotechnic composition (of which there are numerous variations) and allowed to dry. (U)

# UNCLASSIFIED

- The IED was concealed in a cardboard parcel post pack and contained four steel tubes inside a timber frame. When the victim opened the lid approximately 5cm, the package exploded, causing lacerations and burns to the victim. (U)

## Power sources

Of all incidents recorded for 2014, eight recorded incidents made use of battery as a power source. Of the eight, five were attributed to bombings, two are attributed to hoaxes and one is attributed to a suspect item. The popular 9V battery can be attributed to three IED, followed by a 6V (one), 1.5V (one) and a mobile phone battery (one). Two other IEDs were recorded as showing evidence of being electrically initiated; however, the power source is unknown. (U)

## Main charge

Of the 56 recorded bombing incidents, the majority (24 or 42%) were reported as small IEDs containing a pyrotechnic composition (i.e. commercial fireworks or homemade). Main charges were recorded as unknown in 14 (25%) incidents. The use of commercial explosives was recorded twice, with both associated to bombings in Victoria. CO<sub>2</sub> bulbs and/or Soda Stream<sup>6</sup> bottles were recorded in six incidents. The largest main charge attributed to a bombing could be attributed to the Derrinallum incident, which occurred on the Hamilton Hwy, Friday 11 April 2014; however the net explosive quantity (NEQ) is not clear. (U)

The second largest recorded main charge could be attributed to the suicide incident in WA. A modified fire extinguisher, believed to contain approximately 3.2kg of homemade "black powder", was thought to be used by a male person to commit suicide. Discounting the use of improvised incendiaries (Molotov cocktails - three incidents), all other main charges were under 1kg in weight. (U)

## Switches

In 2014, as in previous recorded years, the use of any type of switch<sup>7</sup> as part of an IED (including bombings, attempted bombings and hoax devices) in Australia is uncommon. Of the three known switches that were used in IEDs during 2014, two are not cleared for release in this report. The third switch was used in Dalby Queensland on 25 March 2014 (refer initiation systems):

- The switch was a piece of wire attached to the lid of a box. When the lid was opened it pulled a plug off the circuit, which in turn triggered the device. The IED also employed a collapsing circuit. (U)

---

<sup>6</sup> Commercial brand name <http://www.sodastream.com.au/co2-cylinders> (U)

<sup>7</sup> A device for making, breaking, or changing a connection in an IED; A single switch can have multiple functions (i.e. arming and/or firing).

# UNCLASSIFIED

## Containers

Of the 56 bombing incidents recorded, 37 incidents (66%) were recorded as either an unknown container or no container. Of those that were recorded with a container, the CO<sub>2</sub>/Soda Stream was recorded with six, followed by aerosol cans with four and pipe bomb configuration (PVC or metal) with three recorded incidents. Of note is the IED used in the Dalby incident (25 March 2014) which utilised three containers – four screw-capped steel tubes containing a pyrotechnic composition were contained within a four sided timber frame which was then inside a cardboard box. (U)

## Fragmentation/enhancements

In 2014, there was one recorded incident of fragmentation being added to an IED. A “crude homemade grenade” was recovered from a premise in Adelaide on 25 September 2014. The IED consisted of a small amount of HME, a small length of safety fuse and a “few nails added as frag” and weighed approximately 74 grams. In all other incidents, any fragmentation from functioned devices has either been primary fragmentation from the destroyed container or secondary fragmentation from proximate materials. (U)

## Comparison with Previous Years

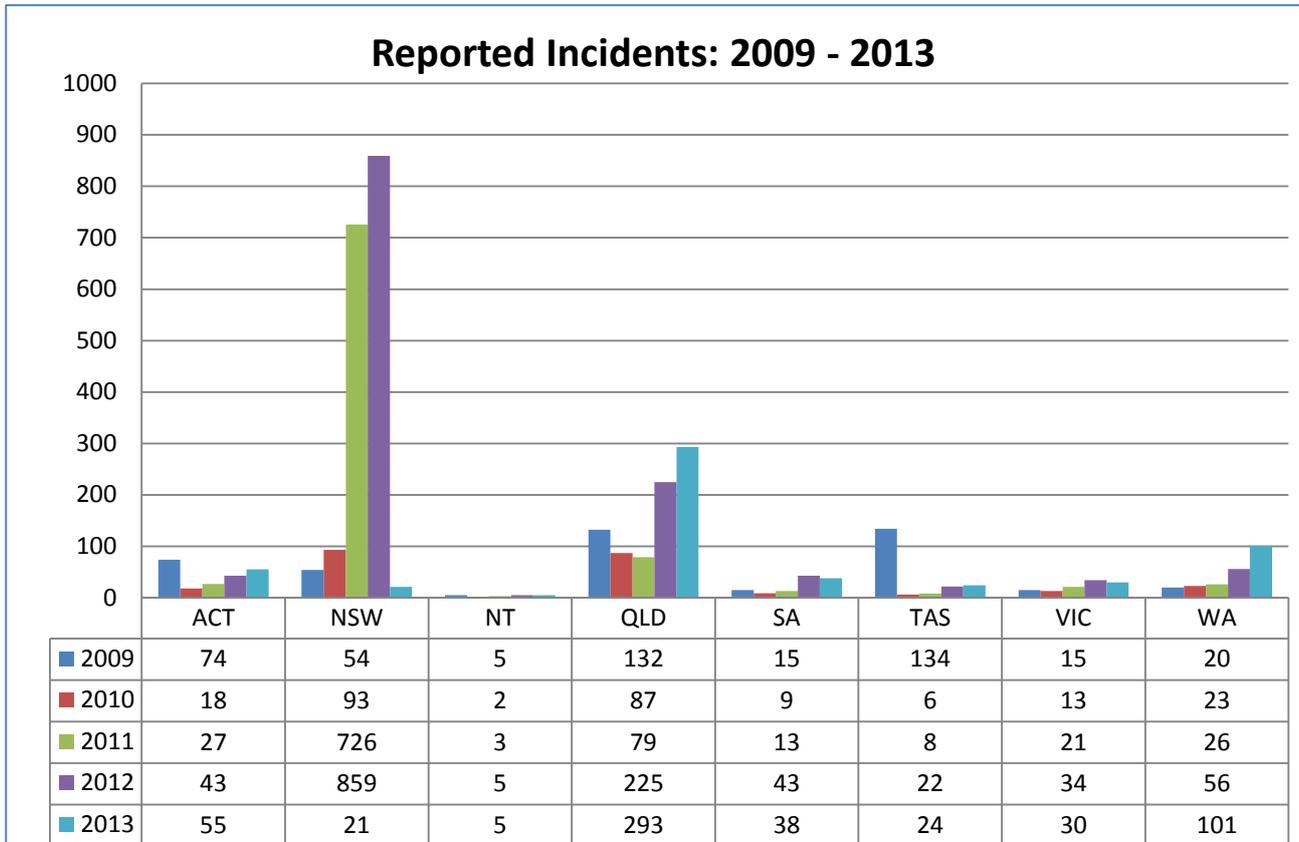
In comparison to the previous year (2013), the majority of jurisdictions reported fewer incidents. However, increased reporting from SA and NSW resulted in a higher number of total incidents – from 567 to 698; an increase of approximately 23%. The variation in numbers is likely attributable to reporting thresholds, rather than major trends.

- ACT: 55 in 2013, 32 in 2014,
- SA: 38 in 2013, 51 in 2014,
- NT: 5 in 2013, 4 in 2014,
- WA: 101 in 2013, 52 in 2014,
- QLD: 293 in 2013, 235 in 2014,
- VIC: 30 in 2013, 13 in 2014,
- NSW<sup>8</sup>: 21 in 2013, 356 in 2014,
- TAS: 24 in 2013, 20 in 2014. (U)

---

<sup>8</sup> A change in NSWPOL data collection procedures has resulted in this apparent drop in incidents.

Incidents over the previous five year period are also shown graphically in Figure 7. (U)



**Figure 5:** Incidents reported by state and territory jurisdictions over the past 5 years. (U)

## Conclusions

For the 2014 calendar year, the availability of commercial explosives and their potential use in criminal activity is still a viable threat in Australia. Although used widely in the mining industry, with restrictions posed on who can purchase and possess them, commercial explosives still account for a quarter of all recoveries. Many of these recoveries have been from private residences with little or no security, making them a potential theft opportunity. (U)

2014 also saw one of the largest non-criminal related explosions in Australia, which occurred when a semi-trailer containing 52.8 Tonnes of SSAN (security sensitive ammonium nitrate) exploded after crashing in central Queensland. (U)

The 2014 statistics also indicate that the vast majority of incidents in relation to motives and targets are unknown. Although an offender will usually have a target and/or motive in mind, this number of reported unknowns usually relates to a lack of information at an incident that points to either a definite motive or target. (U)

# UNCLASSIFIED

Of all of the IEDs that were reported during the year, the IED related to the Dalby QLD incident was the most sophisticated. Generally, IEDs reported during the year were considered small (sub-kilogram) and technologically unsophisticated. (U)

The statistics presented in this report indicate that the IED threat within Australia is significantly lower than many other nations when compared to global statistics. (U)

Contact	AFP19669
Team	Weapons Technical Intelligence, Specialist Operations
Phone	+61 02 6133 3950
Email	<a href="mailto:WTI@afp.gov.au">WTI@afp.gov.au</a>
Consultation	

This document is the property of the Australian Federal Police (AFP). It may not be copied or disseminated to any third party without prior AFP approval. To arrange approval, please contact the Intelligence Dissemination team.

# UNCLASSIFIED